Design Course

Rendering Medium For Illustration - Watercolor

Exploring Watercolor Painting

by
Prof. Phani Tetali and Samidha Gunjal
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://www.dsource.in/course/rendering-medium-illustration-watercolor

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Introduction

Introduction to Illustration:
Illustration is a graphic representation to communicate a thought or text, visualized and made by an artist in any kind of visual form like drawing, painting, photograph or image. It can be an artistic impression for a text, poem, story or anything that needs to be conveyed in visual form. It is the most expressive way to explain the story between the lines or the things, which cannot be expressed in the form of text.

Illustrations are widely used for Books where the drawings / images supplements to the text. There are different techniques and mediums used for illustration such as- acrylic color, watercolor, oil, pencil / pencil colors, gouache, pastels, ink, charcoal, screen-printing, paper cutout, and many more.

There is a basic difference between painting and illustration. Paintings are usually original artworks made on canvas or paper, where as illustrations are printed. A painting can be used as illustration when printed on a surface to explain something. Now a days illustration is also considered as an art form widely used for campaigning and publications.

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Introduction to Watercolor:
Watercolor is a transparent and luminous medium made up of water-soluble pigments in pure form. Traditional watercolor painting includes application of thin, transparent washes of pigments on paper.

Watercolor is the most engaging, unpredictable and uncontrollable medium of painting. At the same time it is most exciting, expressive, quick, clean and portable medium too!

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History

Painting is a very old art form also used by our ancestors in the form of cave painting. Watercolor has a long history from extremely old times. There are records found that watercolor was first used in late 1400s by western artists. These artists had their own secrete methods to formulate, prepare and applying techniques which they kept to themselves.

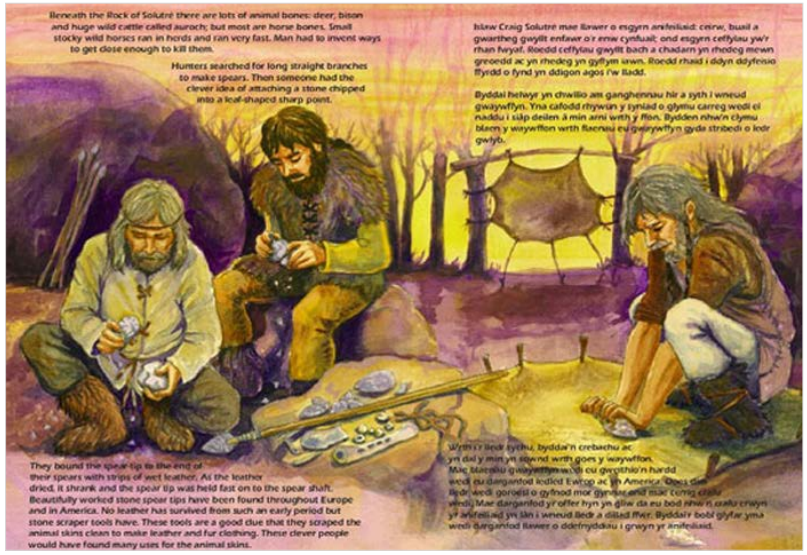
Much later in 18th century, the first paint manufacturer opened shop in major European cities where color pastes were made available along with the basic pigments. Soon after that dry clumps cut out of dry watercolor paints were made available for artists. Artists had to first grind these dry clumps with water to make it usable.

In late 18th century, watercolor came in sets with porcelain pans of moist watercolors that were comparatively cheaper and affordable for general public.

Winsor Newton was the first to introduce Glycerin- softened formula moist cakes in 1835. Later Winsor & Newton modified their original moist cake formula into semi-liquid formula for metal tubes.

Because of this new availability anyone can paint with these readily available watercolors that gave birth to various professionals as well as armature artists!

http://www.watercolorpainting.com/history.htm


Beneath the Rock of Solutré there are lots of animal bones: deer, bison and huge wild cattle called auroch; but most are horse bones. Small stocky wild horses ran in herds and ran very fast. Man had to invent ways to get close enough to kill them.
Hunters searched for long straight branches to make spears. Then someone had the clever idea of attaching a stone chipped into a leaf-shaped sharp point.
They bound the spear tip to the end of their spears with strips of wet leather. As the leather dried, it shrank and the spear tip was held fast on to the spear shaft. Beautifully worked stone spear tips have been found throughout Europe and in America. No leather has survived from such an early period but stone scraper tools have. These tools are a good clue that they scraped the animal skins clean to make leather and fur clothing. These clever people would have found many uses for the animal skins.

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Famous Watercolor Artists

Famous Contemporary Watercolor Artists:

Albrecht Durer *Hare 1502*

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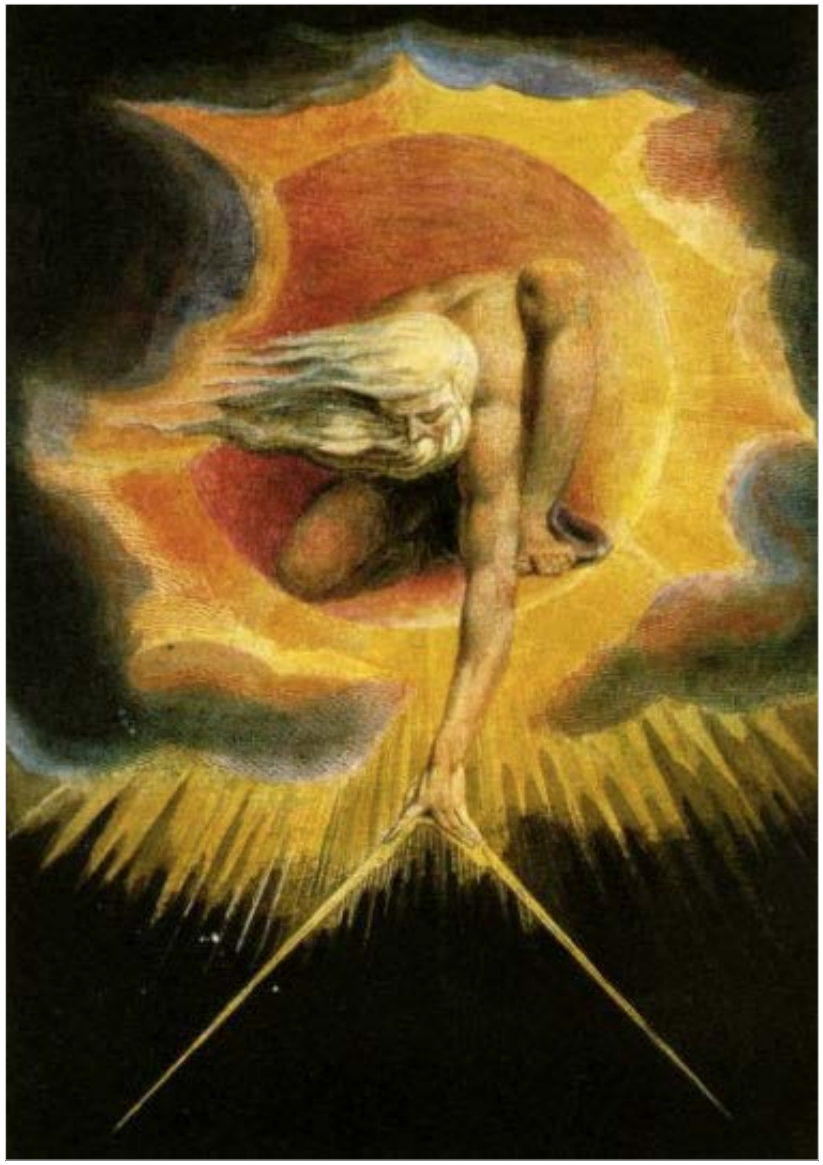

William Bake *The Ancient of Days 1794*

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J. M. W. Tuner *Dolbadarn Castle 1799*

J. M. W. Turner *Venice Looking East from the Guidecca, Sunrise 1819*

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Thomas Moran *Castle Geyser, Upper Geyser Basin 1871*

James McNeill Whistler *Flower Market 1885*

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Winslow Homer *The Blue Boat 1892*

John Singer Sargent *Santa Maria Della Salute 1904*

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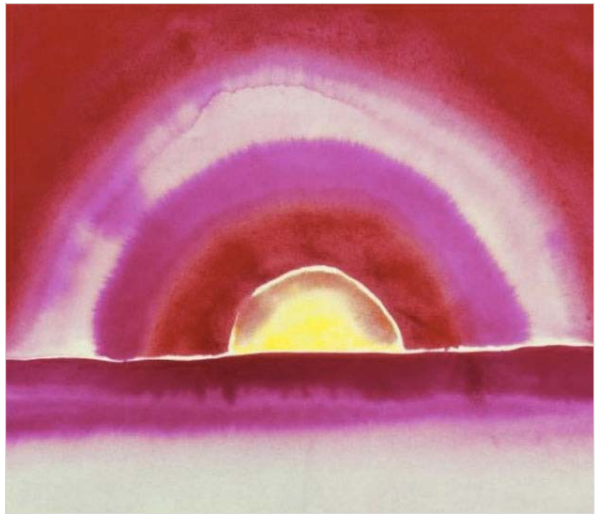
Paul Klee *Red and White Domes 1914*



Georgia O'Keeffe *Sunrise 1916*

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Edward Hopper *Adams House 1928*

Jamie Wyeth *Slayton House 1968*

http://www.craftsy.com/blog/2013/05/famous-watercolor-artists/

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Indian Watercolor Artists

Sanjay Bhattacharya
http://www.indianartcircle.com/sanjaybhattacharyya/

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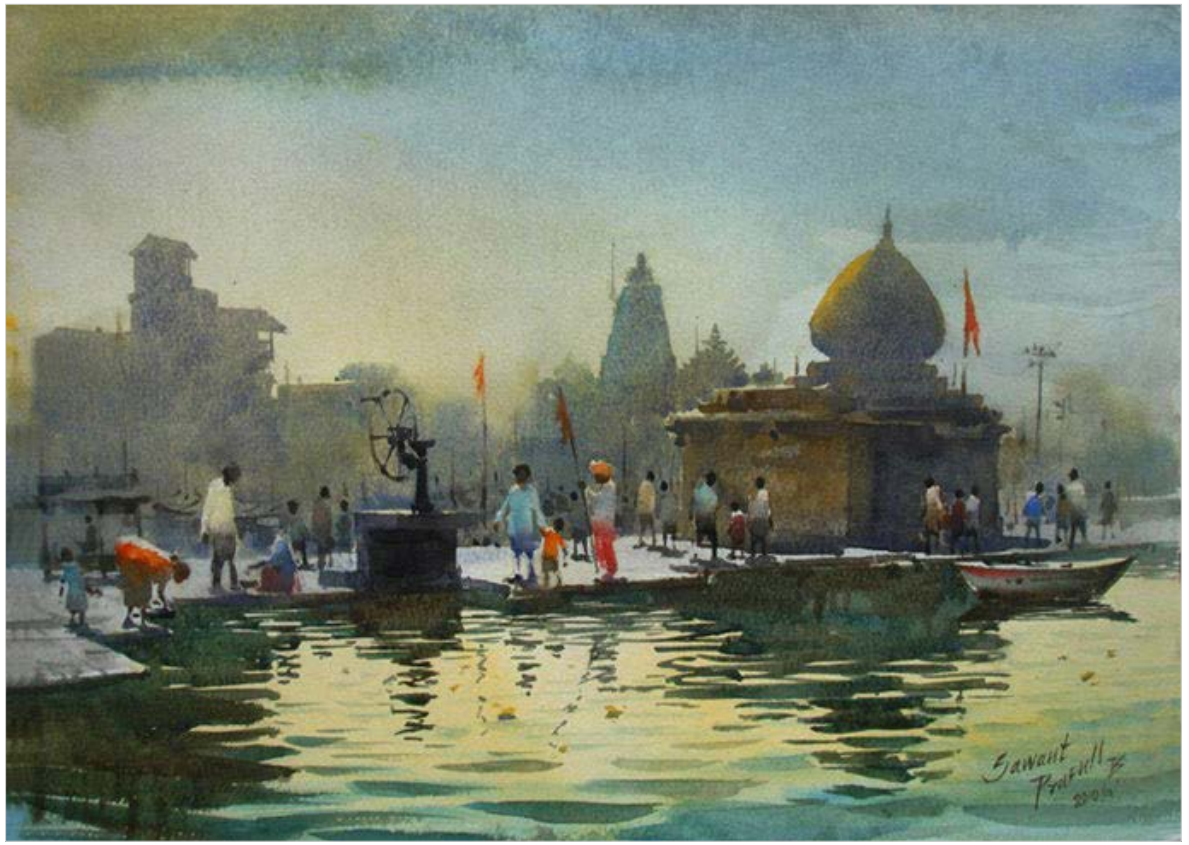

Prafull Sawant
https://www.behance.net/gallery/10858151/Watercolour-Paintings-By-Prafull-Sawant

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Rajkumar Sthabathy
http://artodyssey1.blogspot.in/2012/05/rajkumar-sthabathy.html

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Ananta Mandal
http://faso.com/fineartviews/33463/ananta-mandal-harmoniously-transformed-cityscapes

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Vikrant Shitole
https://www.artsquare.in/index.php/shop/art?artid=MzAx

Vijay Achrekar
http://www.artcafe.in/Products/Artcafe-Paintings-Watercolour-on-paper/Kalakriti/Untitled-X/pid-507166.aspx

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Samir Mondal
https://www.behance.net/gallery/10841489/Watercolor-paintings-by-Samir-Mondal

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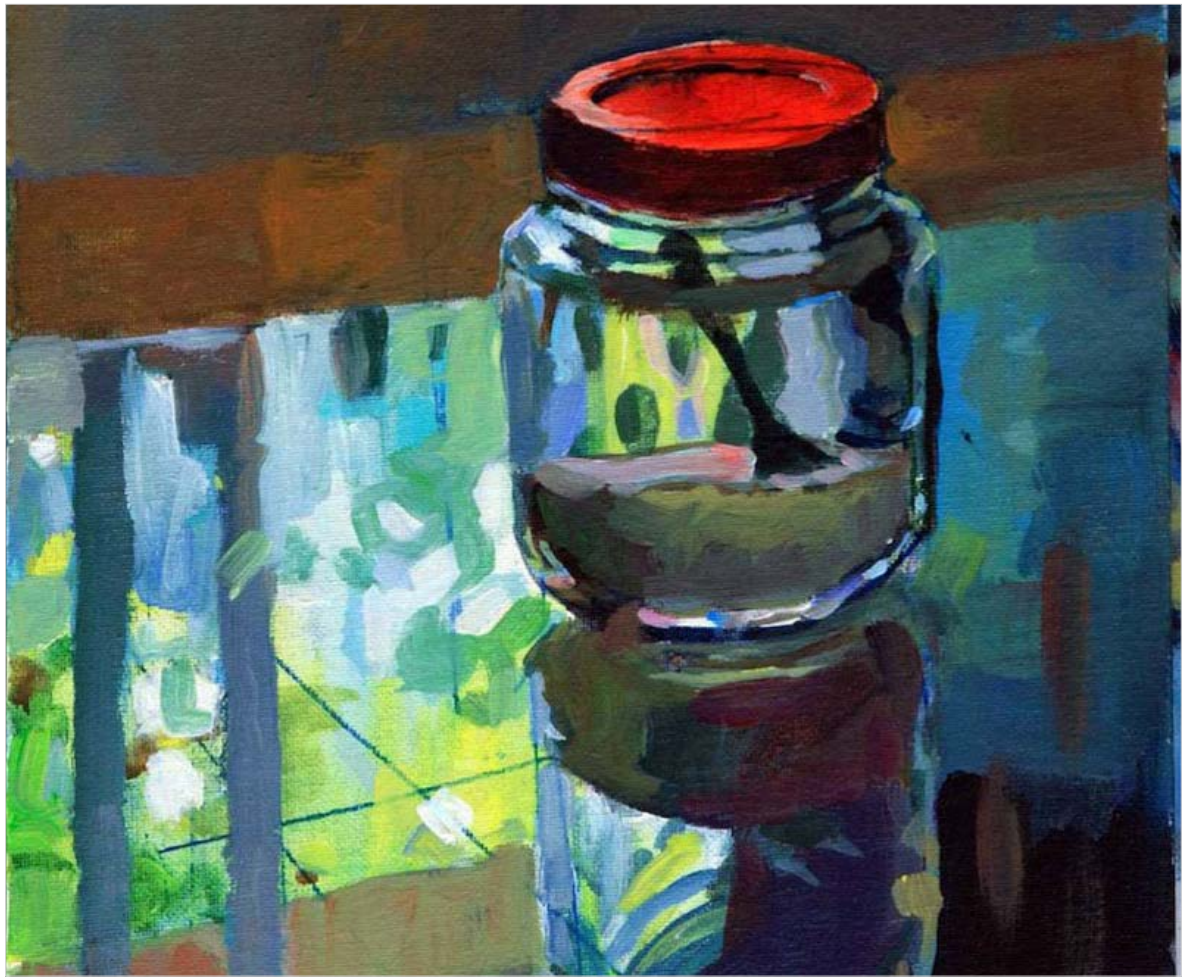

Milind Mulik
http://markovart.org/2013/07/28/milind-mulicks-watercolours/

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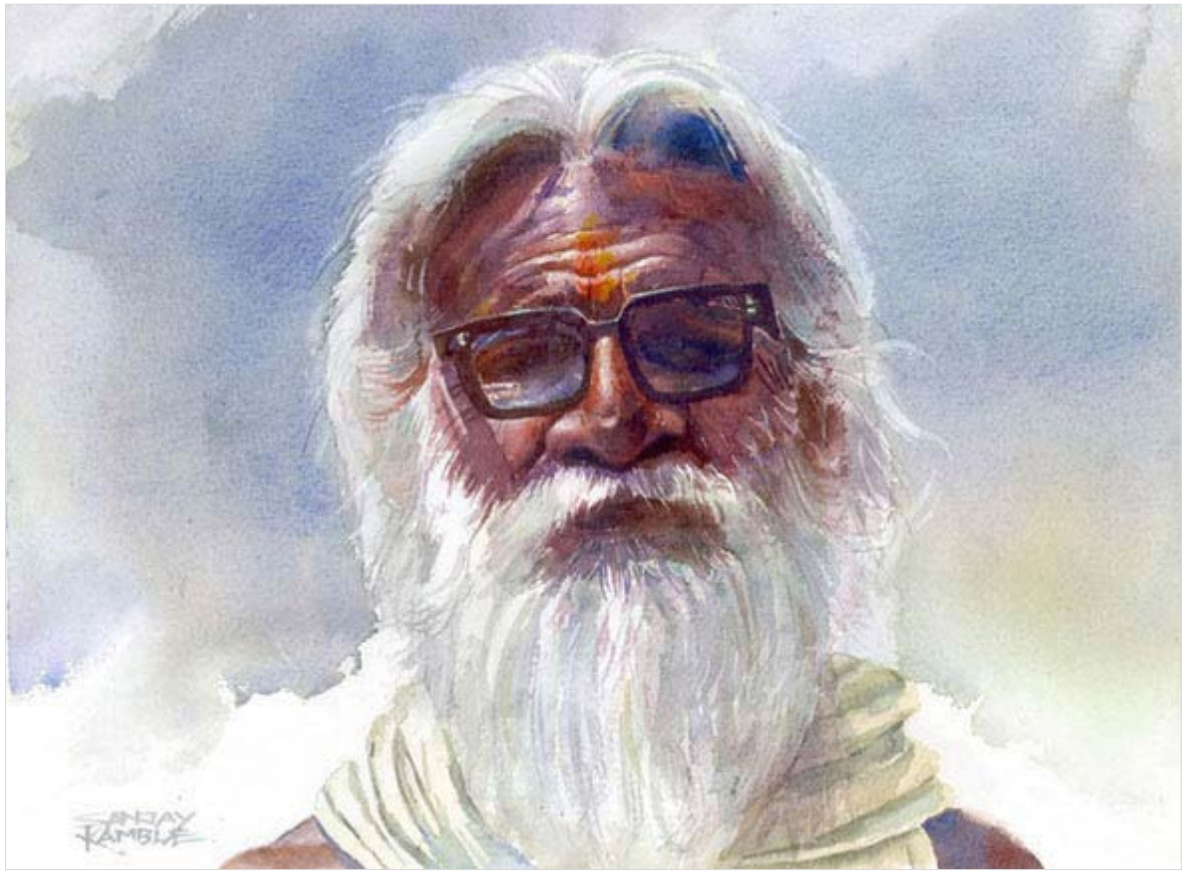

Sanjay Kamble
http://www.sanjaykamble.com/watercolour-2.shtml

http://fineartblogger.com/indian-watercolor-paintings/

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Tools and Raw Materials

Paper

Brushes

Paints

Palette

Painting Station

Other Tools

Special Effects

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Paper

The surface is the most important tool for watercolor because watercolor is a transparent medium in which texture of the surface is clearly visible. In fact it plays very important role in painting.

Also the paper should be chosen wisely as the surface of the paper may peel off with excess use of water. It is advised to use paper made of 100 % cotton pulp, with no wood pulp and acid free for better quality.

There are three types of papers existing in market that is rough, cold pressed and hot pressed which are available in various thicknesses. To begin with one can use cold pressed paper, as it is more flexible to use.

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These papers are easily available in nearby stationary shop and the cost depends on the quality and thickness or weight of the paper. Heavy weighted paper can take more applications of water and paint as well as scrapping and scrubbing.

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Brushes

There are wide verities of brushes available in market but watercolor needs very few brushes. It can be done with medium- large round brushes for details and a flat brush for the washes.

The brush used for watercolor should be softer and denser tuft with fine tip which holds more water and pigment inside its bristle and needs less dipping in the water.

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Mostly the watercolor artists use natural hairbrushes but they are much more costlier than synthetic hairbrushes. For the beginners it is convenient to use synthetic brush, as it is cheaper and easier to use which gives similar finishes.

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Paints

There are 4 most important things to remember while choosing paints are: the type, the form, the quality and the color.
Watercolor comes in two types:

- The transparent pigments
- Concentrated dyes.

Fine artists and professionals mostly use the transparent watercolor pigments where as concentrated water-colors are commonly used for illustrations and architectural drawings.

Pigment colors are more flexible and can be manipulated easily compared to concentrated colors. Concentrated colors are brighter and cleaner and actually stain the paper surface. They can be manipulated only while the color is moist on paper.

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These are available in watercolor tubes, and pans / dry cakes. Most of the artists prefer to use Pans as it comes in set of all colors in a self-containing box. This is easier to carry for outdoor paintings and the covering lid of the box itself can be used as mixing pallet.

There is a wide variety of Watercolor pencils available in market. These are easy to carry and can be used in similar way as normal pencil colors. These pencils are made of water-soluble color leads that give similar effect as watercolor pans. This medium is little tricky because water is applied after drawing with pencils is done.

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   5e. Painting Station
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Palette

Palette is a must to be used tool for watercolor if you are using transparent pigments, as it is not possible to apply the paints directly from tubes. Also one needs to mix various pigments to achieve desired hues and colors. Sometime Pallet itself inspires and provides hints for painting.

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There are wide verities of pallets available in market like flat pallets, pallets with cups and separate mixing area made of plastic or acrylic polymer.

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Rendering Medium For Illustration - Watercolor

Exploring Watercolor Painting

by
Prof. Phani Tetali and Samidha Gunjal
IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:
https://www.dsource.in/course/rendering-medium-illustration-watercolor/tools-and-raw-materials/painting-station

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Painting Station

You can paint anywhere but to set a comfortable painting area is useful to concentrate on the painting process.

One can use clean piece of plywood or thick cardboard and paper clips or tape to mount the paper on the board. It is advised to keep the desk tilted as it easier to work and control the flow of washes. You may frequently have to rotate or change the direction of the board to apply wash from top to bottom or side-to-side. That is why it is easier to use drawing board than desk.

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Other Tools

In addition to above mention tools one may need blotter, pencil and eraser, knife and blade.

Blotter is used to soak the excess of water or pigment from the drawing surface. Special blotting papers are also available in market but clean cotton rag can also be used for the same purpose.

To use watercolor for illustration, one may need to draw the subject first with pencil and then can paint on top of it. Fine artist might not need to draw the subject at all; they can directly start applying paints.

Beginners may use soft lead pencil to draw rough outlines of the subject and the extra-unwanted lines can be erased after painting is thoroughly dry.

Knife and single edge blade can be used for finishing touches after drying of the painting. Especially highlights can be added by scratching the colored surface with the help of these tools.

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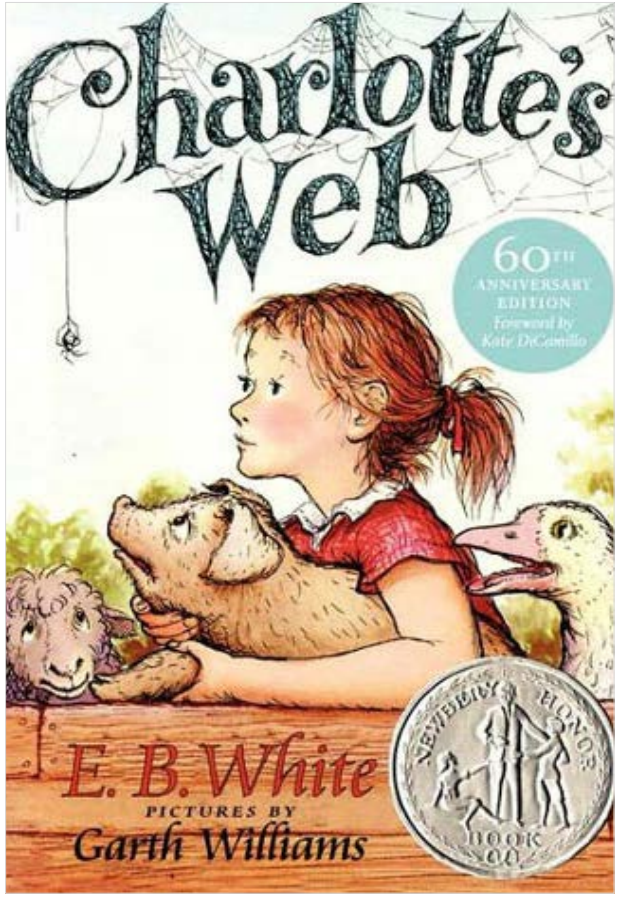
Special Effects

Special Effects:
Once you gain enough confidence in watercolor painting you can try using advanced techniques to add special effects. Rock salt, toothbrush splatter, crumbled tissue paper, rubber stamps, sponge, bleach are some household materials, which can be used creatively to achieve different textures.

Lighting:
Lighting is the most important factor in Watercolor painting as it is necessary to have well lit subject of drawing as well as drawing surface. If possible make use of natural light in the daytime but in the nighttime, the light source should be white.



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Watercolor Techniques

Watercolor painting needs unique techniques unlike acrylic or oil painting where the paints stays wherever they are put and dries in the similar form. Whereas main vehicle of the medium is water which is always active and fluid and changes the appearance when dried! And one has to be very careful with this medium, as it does not allow repainting or corrections. It also takes its own time to dry depending upon the quality and type of paper.

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Following are some very basic techniques / washes to use watercolor:

• **Flat Wash**
It is the most basic technique in which water is first applied on the paper surface and then color pigment is mixed in sufficient quantity to fill entire wet area. It is easier to apply flat washes on sloping surface, slightly overlapping horizontal bands from top to bottom.

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• **Graded Wash**
It is similar to flat wash that requires the pigment to be diluted slightly with more water for each horizontal stroke. As a result of this the wash fades out gradually and evenly.

After completion of the wash, it should be left to dry out completely. If you try to work on wet washes the results can be disastrous!

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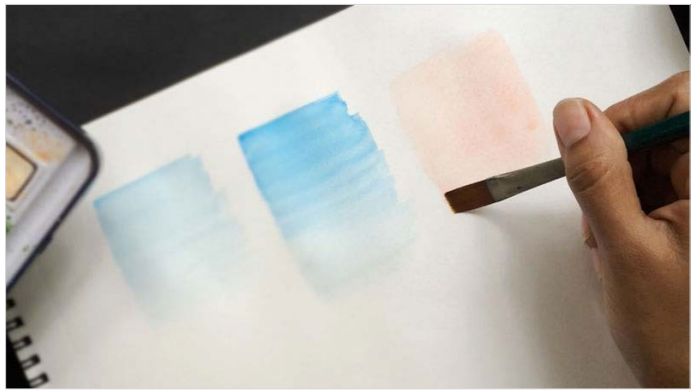
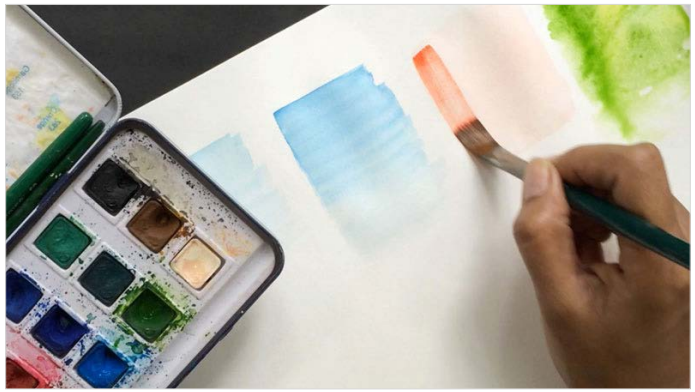
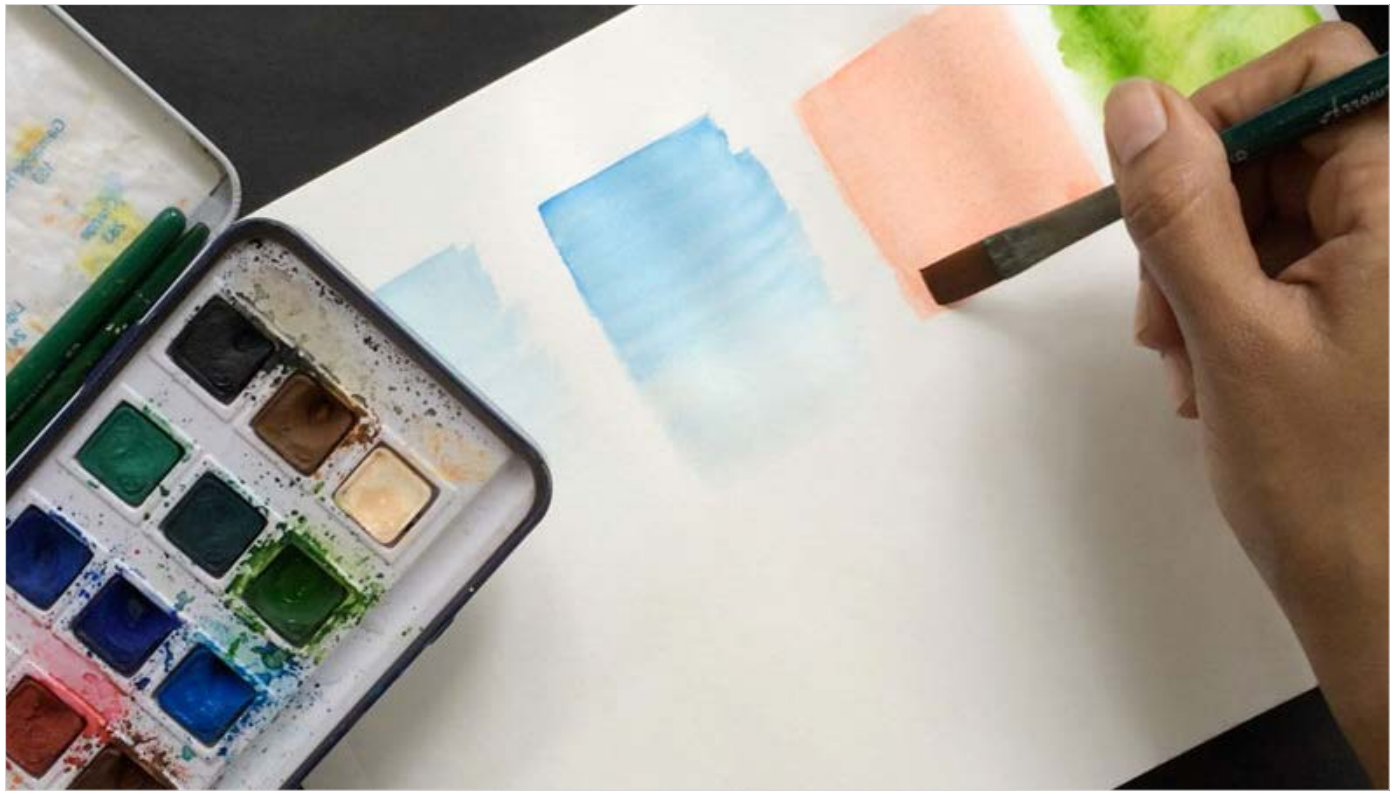
• **Glazed Wash**
It is similar to flat wash where artist applies thin, diluted layer of pigment over dry existing washes to adjust the color and tone of previous wash to achieve the desired effect.







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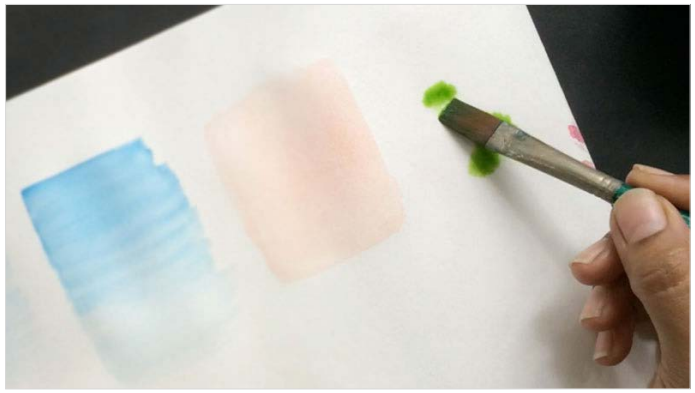
• **Wet in Wet Technique**
It's a simplest and trickiest technique to apply pigment to wet paper. Simply wet the paper with large brush or wet sponge, paint into the dampness that results into soft undefined marks on the paper. It can be used over previously painted region after proper drying only. It gives subtle effect in backgrounds especially for skies.



• **Dry Brush Technique**
In this technique brush is directly used to apply pigments without mixing water to achieve crisp and hard edges. While dragging the dry brush over completely dry paper, it gives unique texture on the paper surface.

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• **Lifting Wet Watercolor**

As name suggests it involves literally lifting the color pigment from the paper. Most watercolors can be dissolved and lifted off even after drying. The process is very simple, wet the area to be removed with brush or sponge and then blot the pigment with dry tissue paper or sponge. This can also be done using clean and dry brush edge.

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• **Lifting Dry Watercolor**
This is almost similar to lifting wet color except color is lifted before the pigment is almost dry or completely dry. Dry brush edge, dry sponge, tissue paper, sand paper, knife, single edges blade or any hard textured tool can be used to achieve various textures and highlights.

Reference:
http://www.watercolorpainting.com/watercolor-tutorials.htm

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Sketching and Inking

With the help of above introduction one can start exploring painting with watercolor which becomes a very addictive pastime. The more you practice and experiment the medium of watercolor which unfolds its magic. The unpredictable nature of the pigments makes it more interesting.

Till now we got detailed introduction about watercolor painting techniques, now I will show an example of 'how to use watercolor for Illustration'. I will explain the step-by-step procedure.

I mostly use watercolor for children book illustration as its very vibrant and bright in colors, which interests children more. Let's take a simple example of a character of a small girl flying a kite in a garden in which focus will be on character coloring, background and detailing.

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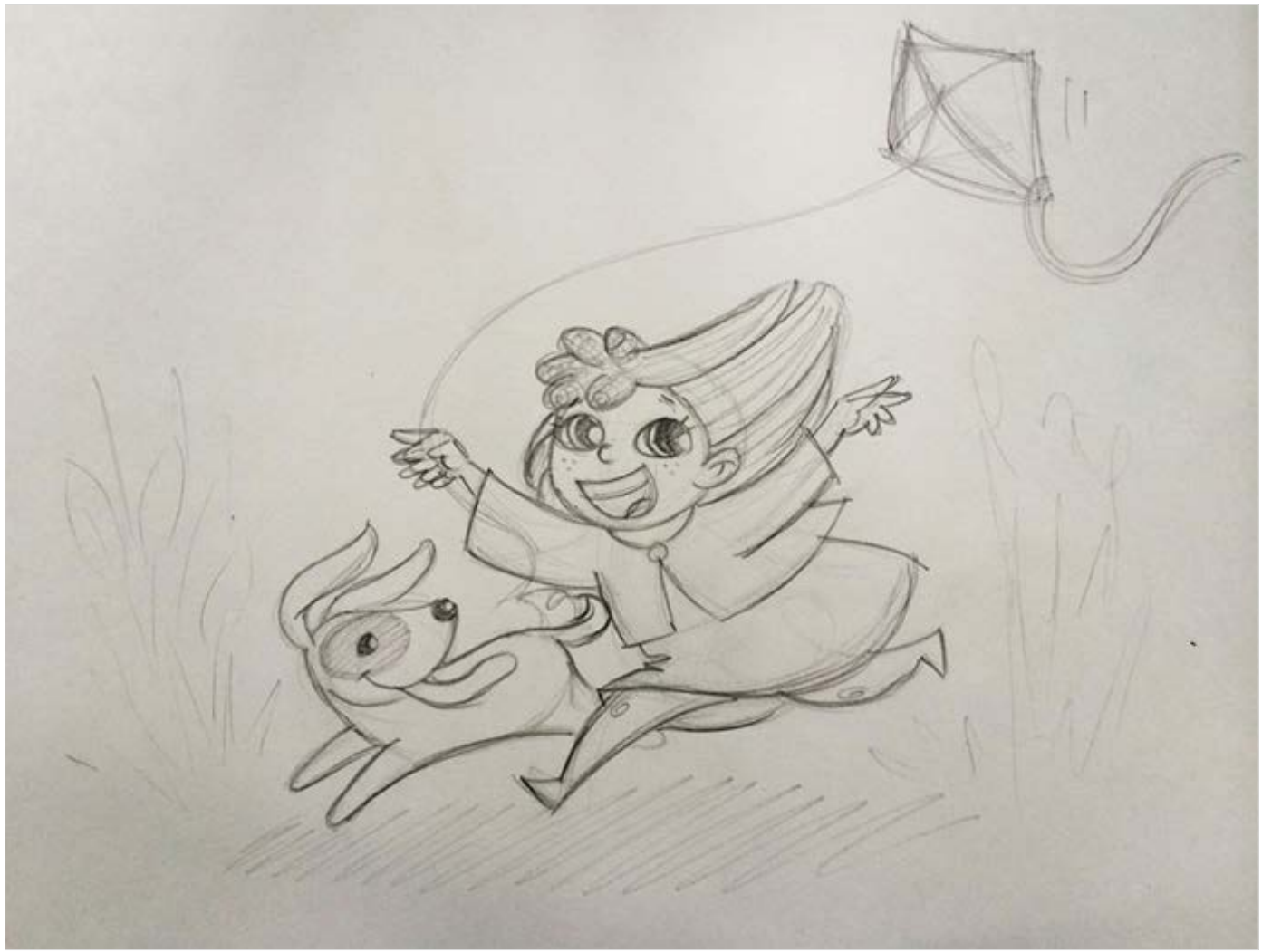
• **Rough Sketching:**
To start with sketches is a good idea whether you are painting from imagination or lively. Take any rough paper and let your ideas flow through your pen or pencil. Here are some doodles for the illustration I am planning to do.



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• **Penciling:**
After finalizing the idea of illustration, start drawing final illustration on the watercolor paper pad. Draw very light pencil lines unless you want them to be visible after coloring. I would like my pencil lines to be visible as it gives little touch of imperfection to the drawing.

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• **Inking:**
I keep scribbling lines on top of lines till I can see required form for my story idea. Once I am satisfied with composition, I start cleaning up the drawing with waterproof ink pen.

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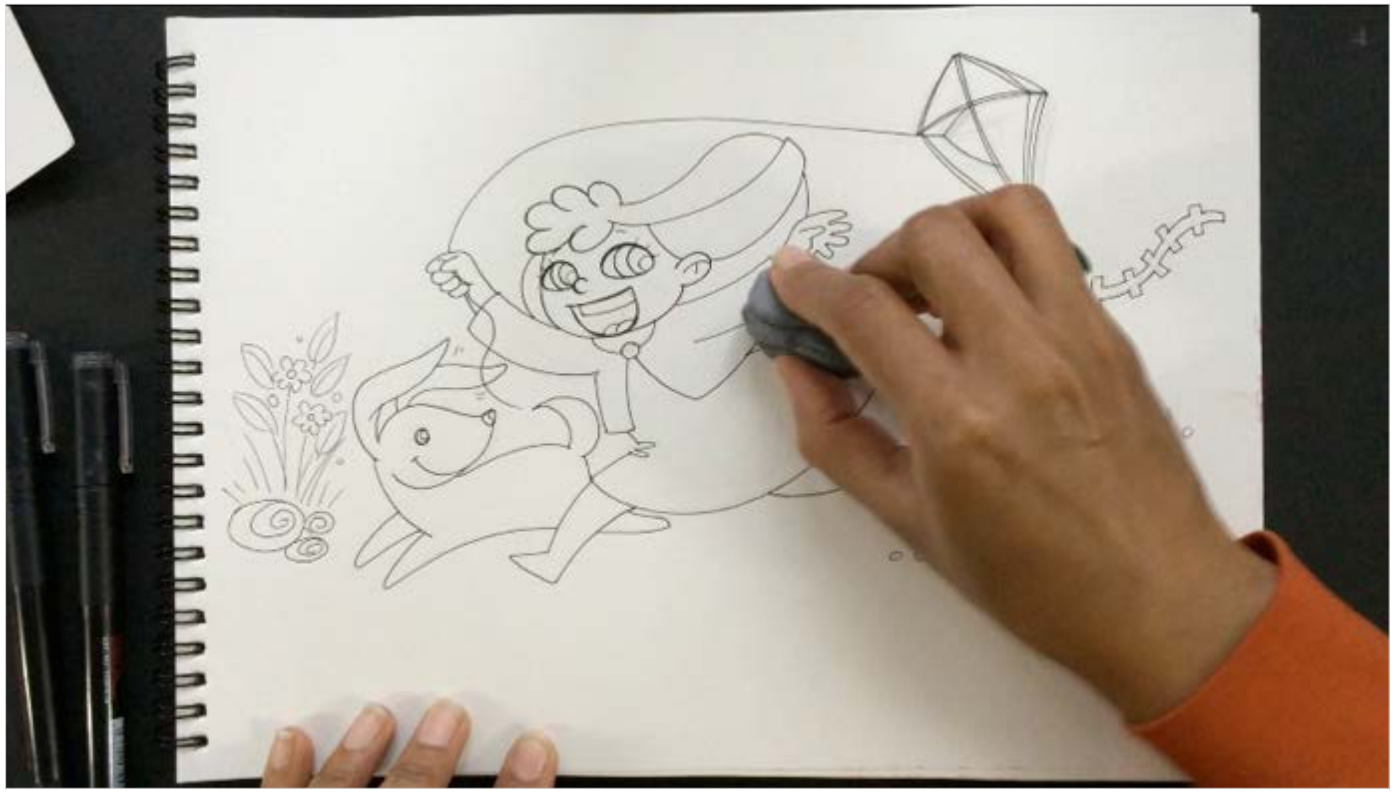

I like to add some more lines to the illustration after completing the painting with waterproof ink pen. I like to add details, shades, and thick and thin lines using inking. Sometimes it helps to bring out the characteristics of the drawing. You can remove the pencil lines using eraser very lightly because it may peel off paper surface.

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Selection of Tools

• **Selection of Tools**
In case of watercolor to achieve a desirable result it is important to choose right tools. As a beginner you don't really need to invest much in expensive supplies. Student's grade watercolors are generally cheaper than Artist's grade. You can kick start with very basic watercolors available in market like 'Artist's watercolor cakes' that cost between ₹50-150 for 12-18 colors set. Though they are cheaper but the quality is still very good.

I use round brushes in 2, 4, 6, 8 and at least two bigger flat brushes. As illustration is mostly not done on larger scales, sometimes I manage with a single brush of 4 or 6.

Take two separate tumblers of water, one for washing brush and another for mixing colors. You can use lid of the watercolor box as a color-mixing palette.

For practice purpose you can use simple cartridge paper, super white. My personal favorite is textured cold pressed paper sketchpad, which gives nice texture and look. Sketchpad is handy and best while traveling. You can use a board or mount to support the paper or sketchpad.

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Coloring

• Color Study

Before start coloring the actual illustration, I prefer to try some color combinations at different opacities to see how it looks on the watercolor paper. This can be a very small-scale drawing just to study how the color combination, focus of drawing, light and shades are going to look.

• Coloring

There are many online tutorials and books available on watercolor paintings but I will try to incorporate all the techniques in this one example. Professional artists approach watercolor painting in proper step-by-step techniques. However I am a self-taught artist, I will show you the simplest way to use watercolor for illustration. I like to draw and color illustrations in Classic children's storybooks style. It gives contemporary feel to a modern illustration.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The Tale of PeterRabbit#mediaviewer/File:TaleofPeterRabbit8.jpg

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http://www.megalithic.co.uk/shop/childrens archaeology story books welsh.htm

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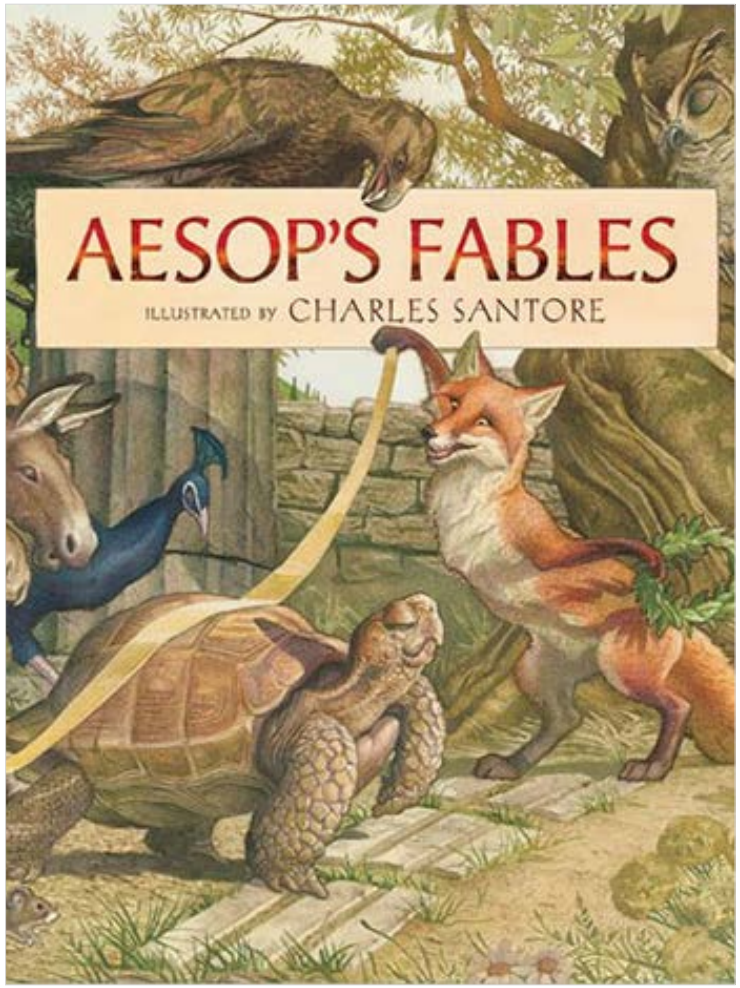

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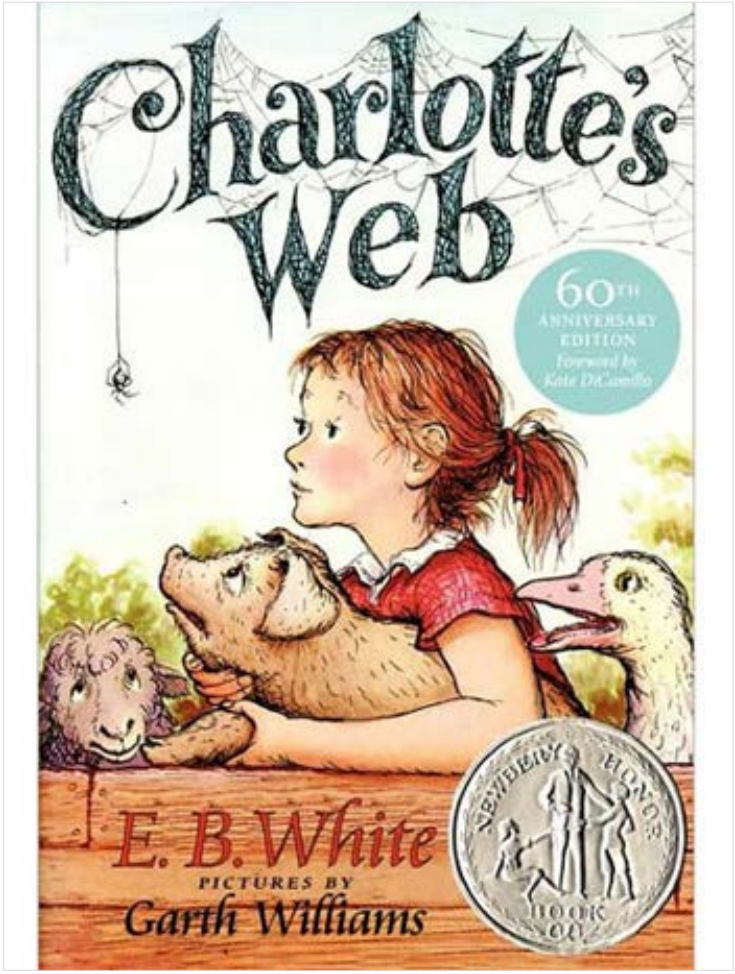

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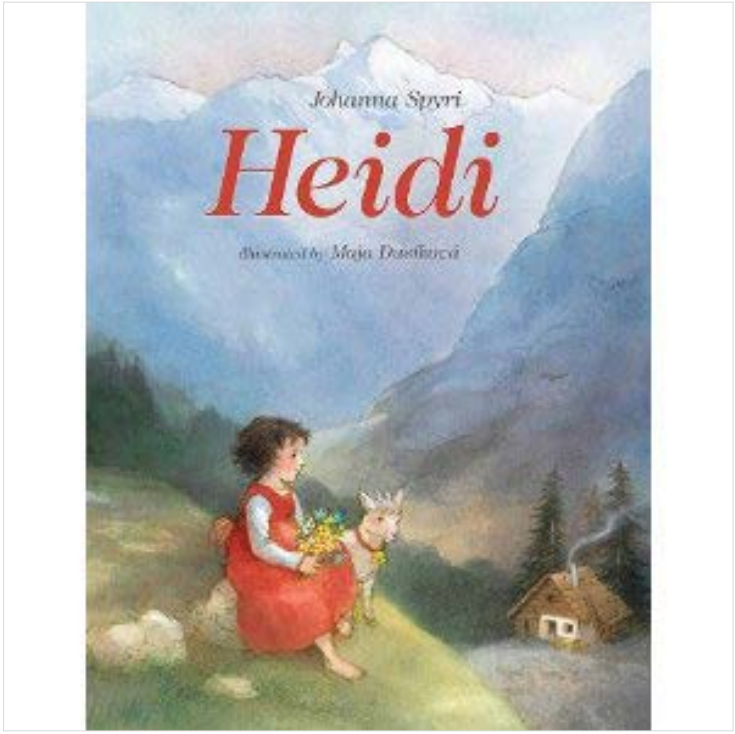

http://www.garyjwolff.com/heidi-girl-of-the-alps-the-1974-anime-series.html

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While painting I like to start with eyes of the character, as it is always the focus of the drawing. It is said that 'Eyes are the doors to the soul'. Then I spread out to secondary visual elements like, facial features, clothes, props and background in the end. The professional watercolor artists do exactly opposite to start with background first.

Initially I have started with the eyes and cheeks and also covered flat wash for hairs.

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https://www.dsource.in/course/rendering-medium-illustration-watercolor/getting-started/coloring

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In the first round I have covered all the areas that need flat washes like her coat and dog's body and let it dry properly. Watercolor tends to look different after drying so you might want to apply more color if required.

Then I started with detailing of girl's dress that has polka dots. So I decided to keep the white dots uncolored and cover up rest of the area.

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The colored portions considered as positive where as empty portions as negative. This helps me to know how to balance and enhance the composition.

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Wait until all the colors dry and then use dry brush technique to enhance the features if needed.

I usually start with background coloring in the very end. I like to use wet in technique for background elements like sky, grass, walls, etc. This technique gives very unpredictable and interesting soft marks on the paper.

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As I have mentioned before, I like to ink the illustration after coloring to add some thick and thin lines to enhance the features.

Sometimes you explore new techniques while using the medium itself. Like here what I have done is I have applied some water on the top of dry watercolor, which gives nice smudgy effect. And this is how our completed water color illustration looks like!

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• Light and Shadows

If you have observed carefully, in watercolor the part of the subject that is in light left untouched and blank: only colors and shades are painted. For example while coloring eyes white dots are kept blank to show reflected light from pupils.

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Digital Editing

• **Digital Editing**
As I have mentioned above, Illustrations are mainly done for print media or publications. For that you might need to transfer your illustration to digital platform by scanning or photograph.

One can enhance, retouch, recolor, and reedit the illustration digitally according to the requirement.

I scan or photograph my illustrations and edit those using Adobe Photoshop or mobile applications. There are various softwares and applications available online as well as offline.

Here I have edited the illustration using Adobe Photoshop where I have tweaked a little with color contrast and saturation. I sometime like to add some textured effects to illustration.

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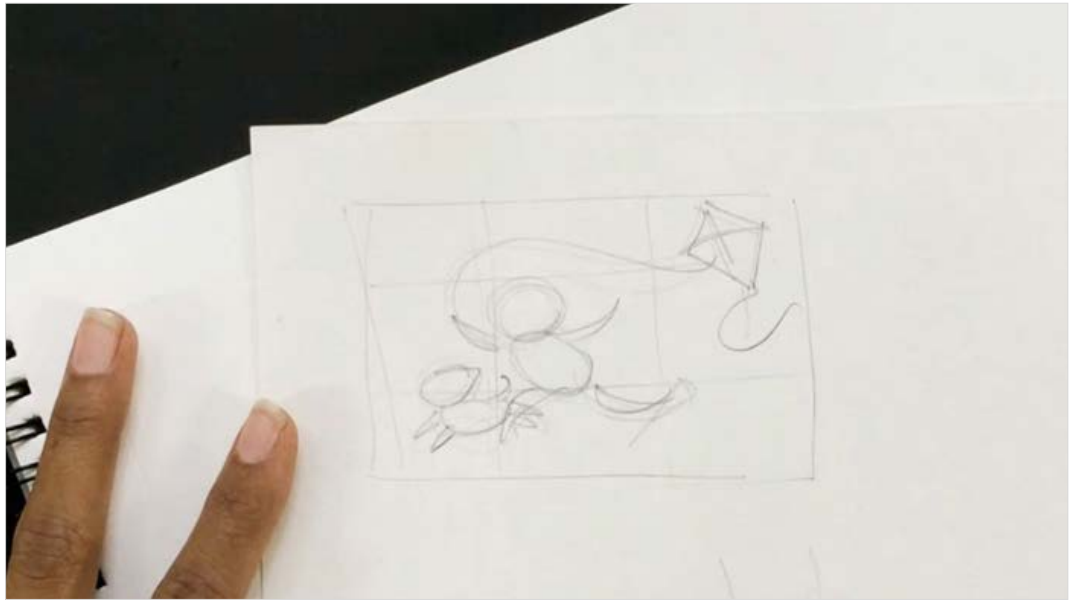
Things to Remember

• **Centre of Focus:**
For any kind of painting or illustration there is a basic key for success is 'centre of interest', which is also called as 'focus of the painting'. Avoid placing focus point in centre of the painting either horizontally or vertically. Use 'rule of Third' for better compositions.



For more details refer to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rule_of_thirds

• **Be Patient:**
To achieve desired effects from watercolor painting, you need to be very patient and let the washes dry properly.

• **Explore and Experiment:**
There are no strict rules to use any medium for painting you just have to know basics and then you can experiment and explore as much as you like.

• **Enjoy the Process!**
It is very important to enjoy the process as you get to learn many things while doing it. Let mistakes happen, who knows you might find new technique to express your ideas. And last but not least, feel good about your artwork it will inspire you to make many more!

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Slide Show

Rendering Medium For Illustration - Watercolor - Slide Show

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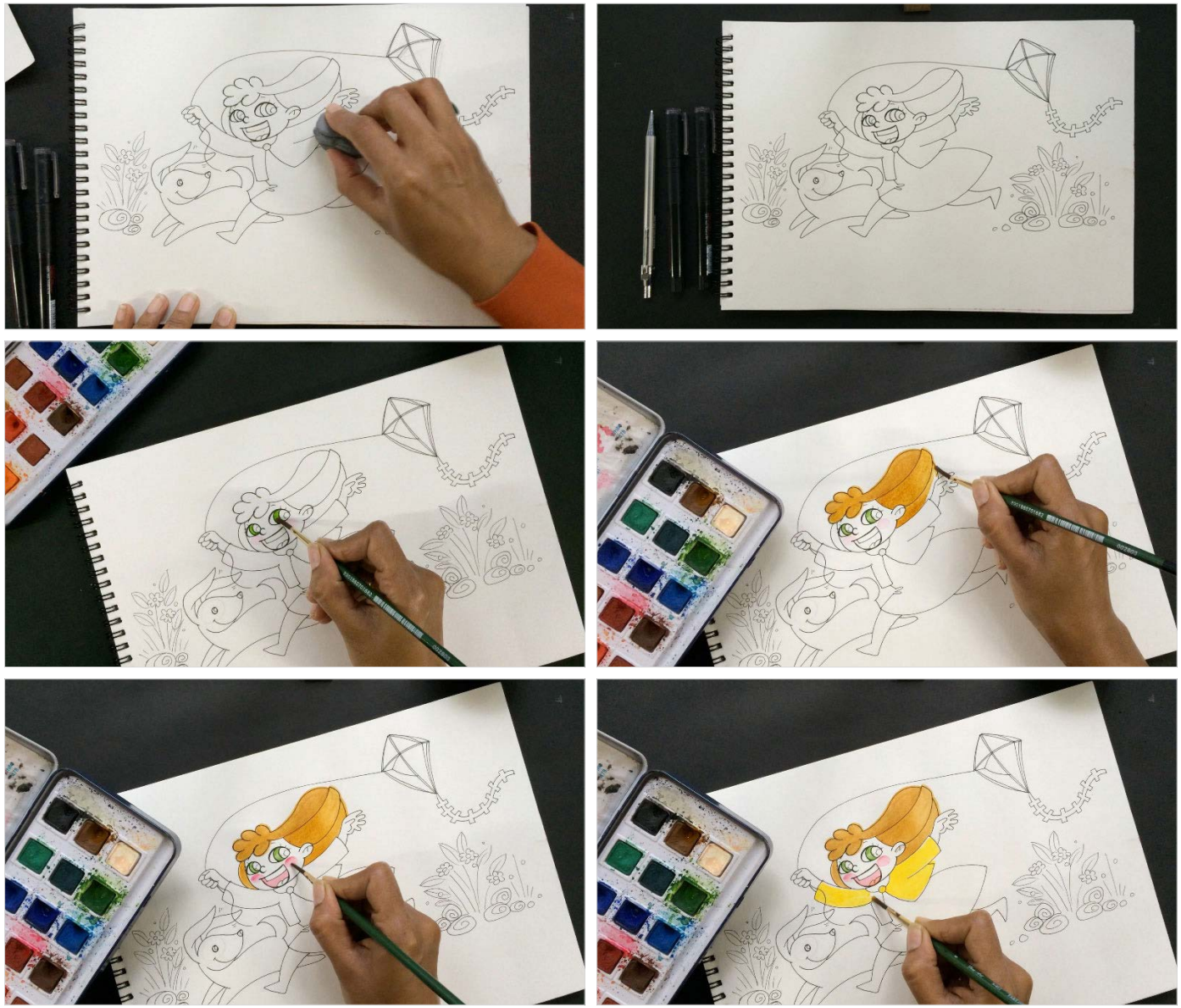

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Video

Watercolor Illustration

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